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REDISTRIBUTIVE WARS AND JUST WAR PRINCIPLES

The topic of the paper is the justness of the so-called global redistributive wars – wars whose prime purpose would be the correction of global economic and power structures that are said to cause suffering in poor countries. My aim is to comment on Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument concerning the implications of Thomas Pogge’s theory of global poverty. Pogge has argued that affluent countries uphold global institutional structures that have a significant causal role in leading to the poverty-related deaths of millions of people who live in poor countries. According to Pogge, rich countries harm the citizens of poor countries. The argument by Lippert-Rasmussen is important, as it suggests that Pogge’s theory of the causes of global poverty, if correct, has a strange implication, namely, the implication that poor countries are or at least could be entitled to a military attack against rich countries. In this paper I will try to show that Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument is not fully compelling, and I will argue that it is not clear whether a global redistributive war would meet the principle of just cause.

Keywords: *War, Poverty, Redistribution, Liability, Morality, Justice.*

1. Introduction

The topic of this paper is the justness of the so-called global redistributive wars – wars whose prime purpose would be the correction of global economic and power structures that are said to cause suffering in poor countries.¹ My aim here is to comment briefly on Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen’s (2013) argu-

¹ This paper was originally written for the volume that is published in honor of a respected philosopher and administrator, Vladimir Bryushinkin, who died prematurely in 2012. The book is in Russian, but the publisher and the editors have kindly allowed me to publish this paper also in English (as it was first written in English). Among many other issues, Bryushinkin (e.g. 1999) was interested in Kant’s philosophy. One of the problems that Kant examined was a question concerning war and peace, the question he addressed in *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795). The present paper is also about war and peace although my discussion will be connected to recent contributions on the topic rather than those of Kant.

ment concerning the implications of Thomas Pogge's (2013) theory of global poverty, and to analyze Pogge's reply to the worries that Lippert-Rasmussen introduces. As most of the readers probably know, Pogge has forcefully argued that affluent countries uphold global institutional structures that have a significant causal role in leading to the poverty-related deaths of millions of people who live in poor countries. According to Pogge, rich countries harm the citizens of poor countries. The problem is not merely that rich countries fail to help poor countries; rather, rich countries violate their *negative duty* not to harm people in poor countries. No doubt, Pogge's theory is controversial, and most citizens (including philosophers) of the so-called rich countries do not think that they or their countries have indirectly caused global extreme poverty, although many of them do think that global extreme poverty should be eradicated. However, Pogge has presented a rather detailed analysis of the causes of world poverty and, possibly, it is correct to claim that contributions by rich countries are in fact quite significant. The argument by Lippert-Rasmussen is important, as it suggests that Pogge's theory of the causes of global poverty, if correct, has a strange implication, namely, the implication that poor countries are or at least could be entitled to a military attack against rich countries.² Such an attack would have catastrophic consequences. Lippert-Rasmussen does not intend to present his argument as a *reductio* of Pogge's analysis, that is, Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 68, 83) does not intend to argue that Pogge's theory should be rejected because of its implication. But surely many of us would be inclined to say that something must be wrong with a theory which implies that if poor countries caused hundreds of millions of casualties through large-scale military aggression against rich states, they would not necessarily be acting unjustly.³ It is interesting to know, there-

² Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 65) writes about "Pogge's theory of the causes of global poverty".

³ People may have different intuitions about the issue. Charles R. Beitz (1975: 388) writes that "a war of self-defense fought by an affluent nation against a poorer nation pressing legitimate claims under the global principles (for example, for increased food aid) might be unjustifiable". Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 68) refers to Beitz.

fore, whether Lippert-Rasmussen's view about the implications of Pogge's theory is correct.

I will proceed as follows. I will first introduce Lippert-Rasmussen's argument and its basic assumptions. I will then analyze some of the points that Pogge raises against Lippert-Rasmussen's claims. At the end of the paper, before the concluding remarks, I will try to show that Lippert-Rasmussen's argument is not fully compelling, despite the fact that it highlights an important connection between issues of global distributive justice and a good old just war theory.

2. Lippert-Rasmussen's argument

Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 65) describes his argument as the "conditional equivalence claim", that is, the claim that if Pogge's theory concerning the causes of global extreme poverty is correct, then "our relation to poor countries is morally equivalent to one in which we each year killed many of the global poor by military means". The basic assumption of his argument is the idea that if rich countries were to attack poor countries by military forces, then poor countries would have a right to self-defense. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 66-67) asks a provocative question:

Suppose we — people living in rich countries — killed 18 million people in India and Africa each year by sending them poisoned food to save ourselves from some rather insignificant costs per capita-wise, or did so through military actions. If so, India and African countries might well act justly were they to wage war on us to prevent our hypothetical mass killing of their citizens. Suppose too that Pogge is correct that we bring about this massive number of deaths each year in poor countries, and assume the moral permissibility of self-defence by poor countries in the hypothetical poison- and military action scenarios. An obvious question now arises: would poor countries not similarly be engaged in a just — perhaps even morally permissible — war, were they to take up arms to force us — people living in rich countries — to eliminate the unjust global structure that we impose on

them thereby causing deaths among them on such a massive scale?

Lippert-Rasmussen's answer is that there is no morally significant difference between the cases. A "defensive war waged by poor countries to prevent military attacks by rich countries threatening to kill 18 million of their citizens on a yearly basis" can satisfy all crucial *jus ad bellum* principles of the "traditional just war theory", given that those principles are interpreted plausibly (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 73, 82). Similarly, a "redistributive war waged by poor countries to undo an unjust global structure imposed on them by rich countries and threatening to kill 18 million of their citizens on a yearly basis" can also satisfy those same principles, again, when they are interpreted as plausibly as possible (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 73). According to Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 67), if Thomas Pogge's theory of the causes of global extreme poverty is correct and rich countries are indeed causally responsible for the poverty-related deaths of millions of people who live in poor countries, then, because of their responsibility, rich countries are or at least can be *liable to being attacked* in the sense that it would not be unjust to attack rich countries (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 81). Of course, this is not to say that it would be morally permissible to attack, for a war may be just without being morally permissible. "A war may be just and yet morally impermissible, if the country that war is waged against is liable to attack, but the consequences of attacking it are very bad" (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 73fn).⁴ Lippert-Rasmussen considers also the question whether global redistributive war can be morally permissible, but his main thesis is the claim that such wars can be just and meet all *jus ad bellum* principles, given that Pogge's theory is acceptable.

The principles we are talking here are familiar ones, although their exact formulations vary. Below is John Mark Mattox's (2006: 9-10) list of *jus ad bellum* principles as presented in *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War* (2006). I have shortened Mattox's descriptions of them:⁵

⁴ Cited also by Pogge.

⁵ Mattox's list is more comprehensive and detailed than the one Lippert-Rasmussen uses.

- (1) Just cause. The reason for resorting war must, itself, be a just reason.
- (2) Comparative justice. Comparative justice requires that the claims of an aggrieved party also must be of such magnitude that the presumption against war is overridden.
- (3) Right intention. The internal motivation must itself be just.
- (4) Competent authority. The decision to go to war can be declared only by a person who has no political superior.
- (5) Last resort. Not even those authorized to declare war are justified in doing so if there be any reasonable means to avoid it.
- (6) Public declaration. The aggrieved state must set forth the reasons that impel it to war.
- (7) Reasonable probability of success. A war that presents little or no hope of serving as a vehicle for obtaining satisfaction for just grievances is not morally justifiable.
- (8) Proportionality. The moral good expected to result from war must exceed the amount of evil expected naturally and unavoidably to be entailed by war.
- (9) Peace as the ultimate objective of war. The end of violence must be *the* end toward which the war is fought.

What makes Lippert-Rasmussen think that a shocking global redistributive war can satisfy all these principles? In particular, how can such a war satisfy the last resort principle, the reasonable probability of success principle, and the proportionality principle?⁶ It is important to distinguish two arguments that I will call (A) the special circumstances argument and (B) the reinterpretation argument.

(A) The special circumstances argument supports the claim that, in special circumstances, global redistributive war *can* be just, given that Pogge's theory is correct. The argument here is not that global redistributive war *would be* just in the world as it is. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 74) writes that "we can easily imagine that a redistributive war is started after all other

⁶ Thomas Hurka (2005: 37) has argued that "the *ad bellum* proportionality condition incorporates hope-of-success considerations, and it can also incorporate last-resort considerations".

means might reasonably be thought to eliminate the unjust structure – *e.g.* negotiations, pleas, threats – have been tried and failed and that military force is the only available means left to oppose the unjust global structure”. This is to say that we can imagine circumstances in which the last resort principle would be satisfied by global redistributive war, not that it would be satisfied in the actual world. Although Lippert-Rasmussen does not ponder how far the hypothetical world in which the last resort condition would be met is from the actual world, it is clear that it is quite far. In the real world, there are plenty of alternatives to the use of military force.

In special circumstances, global redistributive war can also satisfy the reasonable probability of success principle as well as the proportionality principle. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 81-82) asks readers to “make some counterfactual assumptions” and suppose that “redistributive wars would not be futile” and that “the harms redistributive wars involve are proportionate to the wrongs avoided”. In such a hypothetical world both the reasonable probability of success principle and the proportionality principle would be met. Therefore, there is no reason to think that global redistributive war *cannot* be just because of these two just war principles. Of course, the claim here is not that global redistributive war would be just in the world as it is. In the actual world redistributive wars would almost certainly be completely futile and disproportionate, although Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 82fn) points out that “while the proportionality and the futility requirement obviously are extremely unlikely to be met in the case of a full-scale redistributive war, it is unclear that they are very unlikely to be met in the case of various asymmetric forms of warfare aimed at eliminating the unjust global structure”.⁷ This suggests that Lippert-Rasmussen thinks that the world in which global redistributive war would satisfy the reasonable probability of success principle and the proportionality principle is not totally fictional, but can come true someday, especially if we rule out full-scale wars.

(B) The reinterpretation argument supports a stronger conclusion that the special circumstances argument, stating that

⁷ Here Lippert-Rasmussen refers to Saul Smilansky’s (2004) paper on terrorism.

global redistributive war would be just in the *actual world*, given that Pogge's theory is acceptable and that relevant just war principles are radically reinterpreted. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 82) writes that his understanding of the *jus ad bellum* doctrine "does make the doctrine as plausible as possible". In practice, he rejects the last resort principle. He writes that although the principle "might well be a perfectly justified rule at the level of conventions of war" (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 74fn), we should "reject the last resort requirement at the level of fundamental moral principles of war" (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 74). The justification of the rejection (or the reinterpretation of the role of the principle) is straightforward. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 74) conjectures that those who support the principle of last resort think that "war will almost always involve greater harms than alternative means of realizing just ends" and that states should comply with the principle as "a rule of thumb".⁸ But if this is so, then the principle of last resort cannot be a fundamental principle, as there are or at least can be cases in which other means (say, a trade embargo) cause more suffering and casualties than war. There is no reason to think that war cannot be just even if there are means available other than war that would also ensure that just ends would be reached.

According to Lippert-Rasmussen, the reasonable probability of success principle and the proportionality principle should also be reinterpreted. In practice, this means two things. First, the reasonable probability of success principle should be put aside altogether when the justness of war is estimated.⁹ Second, the proportionality principle should be applied so that the harms caused by a country that is liable to being attacked are not taken into account in calculating proportionality.¹⁰ Lippert-

⁸ Arguably, the rationale for the principle of last resort is to restrict the unilateral use of force and to encourage reliance on institutionalized procedures of conflict resolution (as such reliance has benefits in the long run).

⁹ According to Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 80fn), the reasonable probability of success principle is "implausible" also because it says that if a war will merely "come pretty close" to achieve its objective, but fails to "fully meet" it, then the war "would be unjust". But this scenario is not realistic as, in this case, the government would surely slightly *change* the objective of the war so that it *could* be met "fully".

¹⁰ For a different view, see e.g. Hurka, 2005: 47.

Rasmussen (2013: 81) writes that if “liability does depend on one’s ability to defeat self-defence and to impose disproportionate harms in the process of resisting one’s victim’s self-defence, a country (or an individual attacker) may gain immunity against attack by building a doomsday bomb and making certain that any attempt to resist this country’s aggression will result in its use”. Similarly, if a country is liable to being attacked – as affluent countries may be – then it cannot change this fact merely by threatening to use extreme military force in case of aggression. To think otherwise would be strongly counter-intuitive. Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 81) writes that “rich countries are liable to attack despite their ability to defeat any attempt to impose a just global structure and to impose disproportionate harms on any poor country that tries”. A country’s liability to be harmed cannot diminish simply because it “will act in certain unjust ways if threatened with that harm” (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 81). Since the reasonable probability of success principle and the proportionality principle are not consistent with this claim if they are not radically reinterpreted along the lines suggested by Lippert-Rasmussen, both principles should be reinterpreted. Although the principles “may show why some redistributive wars are not permissible, they do not show that rich countries are not liable to redistributive war” (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 82). This is because when the liability (or justice) is the issue, then both principles should be reinterpreted.

Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 82) is well aware that his reading of just war theory “may not be the normal understanding of *jus ad bellum*”. Arguably, on the “normal” reading of just war theory, the permissibility and justness of war are not two separate issues, although we can of course distinguish between moral permissibility and justness in many other contexts. In *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625), Hugo Grotius (1995: 172-173), one of the leading classical jurists, writes about *permissibility* of self-defense when introducing the *just* causes of war. Michael Walzer (2004: x), who is probably the best known just war theorist of the twentieth century, explains in *Arguing about War* (2004) that in the context of just war theory, the term *just* “means justifiable, defensible, even morally necessary (given

the alternatives) – and that is all it means”. If this is correct, and permissibility and justice should not be distinguished in the context of just war theory, then it does not make much sense to claim that a global redistributive war could be just but not morally permissible, or other way round.¹¹ Notice also that an ordinary understanding of the proportionality principle takes into account all (relevant) consequences of the war, not only those inflicted by the party who has a just cause to resort to war. According to an encyclopedia formulation of the proportionality principle, a “state must, prior to initiating a war, weigh the *universal* goods expected to result from it, such as securing the just cause, against *universal* evils expected to result, notably casualties” (Orend, 2005).¹² If this formulation is “normal”, then a war can be just only if all (relevant) goods and evils “expected to result from it” are in right proportion. Lippert-Rasmussen seems to hit the mark in assuming that his understanding of just war principles may not be the normal one.¹³

Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument is much more detailed than the sketch above indicates, but for the time being this is all we need. Let us now turn to Thomas Pogge’s reply. He rejects the claim that, if his theory of the causes of extreme poverty is correct, then global redistributive wars would be just.

3. Pogge’s Reply

A major part of Pogge’s reply consists of the critique which aims to establish that, even if it is true that rich countries are causally responsible for the poverty-related deaths of millions

¹¹ The distinction between just and morally permissible wars may be dangerous, if one of the tasks of the just war principles is to guide action. The distinction would almost certainly lead to confusions.

¹² For a discussion, see e.g. Hurka, 2005: 47.

¹³ Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 81fn) writes that rich countries “cannot complain to poor countries that they are waging an unjust war on grounds of its violation of the proportionality requirement given that this disproportionate destruction is something they [i.e. rich countries] bring about”. But if the reason why rich countries cannot complain about the violation of the proportionality principle is that they are responsible for disproportionate (expected) outcomes, then all other agents, say political activists of poor countries, *can* complain about the violation of the proportionality principle. Cf. Räikkä, 2014a: 8-10.

of people who live in poor countries, the citizens of rich countries have *not* forfeited their right not to be killed in a possible redistributive war.¹⁴ The “basic human rights are inalienable”, although in some circumstances the “moral importance of defensive action” may outweigh people’s right to life (Pogge, 2013: 100). The reason why Pogge concentrates heavily on this issue is that in his view one of the claims that Lippert-Rasmussen defends is the thesis that, if Pogge is right, then the citizens of rich countries have forfeited “a substantial component of their right not to be killed” (Pogge, 2013: 98). Pogge’s reading of Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument has some plausibility, as here and there Lippert-Rasmussen writes about “rich people” rather than rich countries and says that an attack against rich countries might not “wrong their citizens” (see Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 81). He also argues that, if Pogge’s theory of the causes of global poverty is correct, “we [i.e. rich people] are not innocent civilians” (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 82).¹⁵ However, interpreted in another way, Lippert-Rasmussen seems to claim basically that rich *countries* have forfeited their right not to be attacked in a redistributive war. He constantly speaks about the liability of “rich countries” (see Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 81), and, as Pogge of course knows, it is consistent to think that rich countries – that is, their military targets – are liable to attack, although their citizens have not forfeited their right not to be killed. (Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 82) seems to be quite willing to accept the “mass killings of innocent civilians as a side-effect”, but he makes clear that “anything that might be impermissible” in a war in which poor countries defend themselves against the military attack by rich countries – “e.g. deliberately targeting rich civilians” – might be “impermissible in redistributive wars as well” (Lippert-

¹⁴ Suppose that someone defends the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by saying that Japanese people had forfeited their right to live because of the aggression committed by Japan. According to Pogge (2013: 99-101), such reasoning (1) would be utterly absurd and (2) closely resembles Lippert-Rasmussen’s reasoning.

¹⁵ Lippert-Rasmussen works on the assumption that the people in rich countries are equally guilty, if they are guilty. See Pogge’s (2013: 99fn) critical comment.

Rasmussen, 2013: 68).) But let us leave this issue aside here and turn to two arguments introduced above.

The special circumstances argument does not convince Pogge, who says that the argument is simply irrelevant. According to him, Lippert-Rasmussen's counterfactual assumptions move us far away from his "analysis of global poverty which is focused on the world as it really is and whose implications were supposed to be the subject of the discussion" (Pogge, 2013: 105). By making "further counterfactual assumptions" Lippert-Rasmussen is of course able to reject any empirical consideration which aims to show that global redistributive war would not satisfy all *jus ad bellum* principles, but in Pogge's (2013: 105) view this is not very interesting. Playing with "hypothetical worlds" does not bear upon the question what the implications of his theory are in the actual world (Pogge, 2013: 101).

This reaction is certainly understandable, given the realistic and openly political nature of Pogge's project, but of course his reply does not show that the special circumstances argument is mistaken. It may well be that, in special circumstances, global redistributive war *can* be just, assuming that Pogge's theory is correct. This conclusion may indeed be irrelevant if we are interested in the implications of Pogge's (2013: 103) theory only in "the world as we know it", but surely we can also be interested in the implications of his theory in certain possible worlds. A person who accepts both Pogge's analysis of the causes of extreme poverty and the special circumstances argument may want to reject the traditional reading of *jus ad bellum* principles, as these principles would justify global redistributive war in certain possible worlds. In this way, the special circumstances argument looks very interesting.

Pogge does not consider the reinterpretation argument at all. He writes that "it is unclear which just-war theory we are using to make the assessment" concerning the justness of redistributive wars, "as Lippert-Rasmussen is criticizing and revising traditional theory as he goes along" (Pogge, 2013: 101). Pogge solves the problem by applying his own list of *jus ad bel-*

lum principles. (He refers to Simon Caney (2005).)¹⁶ This list includes the last resort principle and the reasonable probability of success principle in their traditional forms: a war cannot be just if there are other means available or if a war would clearly be completely futile. However, Pogge (2013: 108) accepts the revised version of the proportionality principle and works on the assumption that “reasoning about permissibility also takes account of the harm the rich countries would do in response to the poor countries’ going to war”, but reasoning about the justness of war takes account only of “the harm that military action by poor countries would do”. With this list in mind Pogge (2013: 105) concludes that, given his “analysis of global poverty, a redistributive war waged in our world by poor countries against the rich countries would not be a just war”. This is because such a war “would not have a reasonable chance of success”¹⁷ (Pogge, 2013: 103) and “would also not be a last resort” (Pogge, 2013: 104). In Pogge’s view, a global redistributive war *would* meet the proportionality principle (and also, *inter alia*, the just cause principle), but this is of course insufficient to show that such a war would be just.

It is hard to see why Pogge accepts the revised version of the proportionality principle, but is unwilling to accept the revised version of the reasonable probability of success principle. After all, Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument in support of the new reading of the proportionality principle is exactly the same argument as his argument in support of the new reading of the reasonable probability of success principle. (Pogge does not say that he has a reason to revise the proportionality principle that would not commit him to revise also the reasonable probability of success principle.) It is also hard to see why Pogge does not comment on Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument against the last resort principle. A possible reason for accepting the traditional reading of the last resort principle is that, as opposed to Lippert-Rasmussen, Pogge thinks that *jus ad bellum* principles *may*

¹⁶ Pogge reformulates Caney’s list and, following Lippert-Rasmussen’s example, makes the proportionality principle more war-friendly.

¹⁷ A person can have a right to self-defense in a life-and-death struggle even if his or her chances of success are low. A country may not have such a right, as futile war would only *cause* misery, not prevent it.

include principles which Lippert-Rasmussen calls “conventions of war” and rules of thumb. According to Pogge (2013: 102), “we should think of just-war theory in realistic terms” which means that the theory should provide “a set of rules that can work well as a moral standard in the world as we know it to reduce the suffering of war”.

Since Pogge does not explicitly evaluate the reinterpretation argument, it would be wrong to say that he does not succeed in showing that the argument is false. But it would be also wrong to say that Pogge succeeds in showing that a global redistributive war would *not* be just in the actual world, given that his theory of the causes of global poverty is correct.

4. Lippert-Rasmussen and the Just Cause Principle

I will now turn to my own concerns regarding Lippert-Rasmussen’s argument. The point I will try to defend here is that it is not clear whether a global redistributive war would meet the just cause principle when it is understood in the way Lippert-Rasmussen does. If I have interpreted his argument correctly, he assumes that a state or a group of states can have a just cause for war only if (1) the aim of the war is sufficiently significant to justify killing, and (2) the countries that are attacked are liable to be warred upon in pursuit of the aim.¹⁸ Lippert-Rasmussen refers to Jeff McMahan in many places, and it seems that he accepts McMahan’s (2005a: 8) claim that there is a just cause for war only when a group of people “is morally responsible for action that threatens to wrong or has already wronged other people in certain ways, and that makes the perpetrators liable to military attack as a means of preventing the threatened wrong or redressing or correcting the wrong that has already been done”.¹⁹ If we agree with Lippert-Rasmussen and Pogge that the “goal of eradicating world poverty” (Pogge,

¹⁸ Cf. McMahan, 2005a: 11; McMahan, 2009: 34. The just cause principle is not simply the requirement that war must have a worthy end or aim. All kinds of aims such as stimulation of the world economy may be “worthy”, but that does not mean that they are just causes for engaging in war (McMahan, 2005a: 4).

¹⁹ McMahan calls this the “formal concept of just cause”. For a criticism, see e.g. Hurka, 2005: 200.

2005: 109) is sufficiently significant to justify the use of military force, then the crucial question is whether rich countries are liable to being attacked. If they are liable, there is a just cause, but if they are not liable, then there is not a just cause either. The notion of liability is of major importance here, as it is also in Lippert-Rasmussen's criticism against the traditional interpretations of the reasonable probability of success principle and the proportionality principle. (However, the concept of liability is far too complex to be analyzed properly here, and we can set the details of that concept aside. We need not assume, for instance, that if a country is liable to attack, then someone has necessarily *forfeited* his or her right to live (cf. Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 81).)²⁰

Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 66-67, 84) assumes that a defensive war by poor countries against a military attack by rich countries would have a just cause, and that such a war would be morally analogous to a redistributive war against rich countries (if Pogge's theory of the causes of poverty is correct). Hence, a redistributive war would also have a just cause (given the truth of Pogge's theory). However, it is natural to ask whether possible defensive wars by poor countries and possible redistributive wars by poor countries are as analogous as Lippert-Rasmussen assumes. Is it not obvious that they are completely different wars from a moral point of view, as in the defensive war poor countries would be under an *intentional* attack by rich countries, whereas in the redistributive war poor countries would attack rich countries whose representatives certainly have no intention of killing the citizens of poor countries (by upholding deadly global structures) and *do not even know* that they are doing so? Lippert-Rasmussen's (2013: 79) answer is negative. In his discussion about the just cause principle, he maintains that even if the "difference in intentions exists and is morally significant", the difference is "insufficiently important to rule out just [redistributive] wars". Intentions are irrelevant, or almost irrelevant, to the justness of a redistributive war by poor countries:

²⁰ As I pointed out in the previous section, Pogge (2005: 97-98, 100fn) does not accept this.

Suppose rich countries imposed an unjust global structure on poor countries with the intention of causing the global poor to suffer. On the view I am canvassing poor countries would be justified in waging a redistributive war in response and this justification would not disappear, or significantly weaken, because we change the example so that rich countries no longer intend to bring about this effect (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 79).

Lippert-Rasmussen thinks that not only are intentions irrelevant but that it is also irrelevant whether the representatives of rich countries *know* what they are doing. He realizes that “whereas rich people are aware of how their countries causally affect the lives of poor people in the case of military aggression, typically, rich people are not aware of how their countries causally affect the lives of poor people through the imposition of an unjust global structure” (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 79). However, in his view, the “difference is insufficient to ground the relevant moral asymmetry”, that is, the asymmetry between the justness of a defensive war and the justness of a redistributive war (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 79fn). He defends this claim by making two points.

First, the fact that one does not believe that one, together with others, poses a threat is not sufficient for the impermissibility of lethal self-defence. Many hold that it suffices that one *ought* to have known that one posed a threat and, second, many would say that even if it is not the case that one ought to have known, it is still permissible to take lethal defensive action against one (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 79fn).

Lippert-Rasmussen does not say explicitly that he agrees what “many hold” and “many would say”, but it seems quite clear that he does. Unfortunately, as far as I see, what “many hold” is false. It is not the case that the people or representatives of rich countries “ought to have known” that they are and will be causally responsible for the poverty-related deaths of millions of people who live in poor countries. This is so even if

we assume that Pogge's theory is completely correct.²¹ Pogge's theory of the causes of extreme poverty is not familiar to lay people and even most top politicians are unaware of it. The citizens of rich countries are not morally responsible for not knowing that the root cause of extreme poverty is actually their own action (if it is) instead of the actions of corrupted politicians who rule poor countries. The question is clearly about *non-culpable ignorance*, and actions done from non-culpable ignorance are themselves non-culpable (cf. Rosen, 2003: 64). The citizens and representatives of rich countries should be aware of colonialism and other dirty details of history, and they should be concerned about extreme poverty and terribly low salaries that are common in poor countries, but they do not have a moral obligation to spend their days by studying what might bring about global poverty today. We cannot talk about blameworthy negligence here.²² Of course, some people who live in rich countries may have an obligation to try to find out what causes extreme poverty, but it is important to notice that not all of those who *have* studied global poverty have agreed with Pogge's conclusion that rich countries are causally responsible for global poverty. The issue is exceptionally controversial (see Jaggar, 2010).²³ (Suppose that the governments of poor countries informed the citizens and representatives of rich countries about the details of Pogge's theory. That would not take away the excuse of ignorance. The theory is controversial and leaves room for a reasonable disagreement – whether or not it is correct.)

Suppose now that “culpability is a necessary condition of liability”, as argued by Kimberly Kessler Ferzan (2012: 672;

²¹ Violent domestic revolutions may be just, as the members of the oppressive group usually know or at least should know that they are oppressing others. Pogge's theory of the causes of extreme poverty does not entail that global order is similar to domestic societies in that respect.

²² I admit that many citizens of rich countries deceive themselves when they believe that they cannot do anything in order to help people in poor countries. But this is not to say that, at some level, they realize or could realize that they are partly responsible for upholding global structures that have terrible causal effects (if Pogge's theory is correct). Cf. Räikkä, 2014b.

²³ Of course, some people accept Pogge's views about the causes of extreme poverty.

2005: 747), for instance.²⁴ If she is right, then it seems that the rich countries are not liable to being attacked (since their citizens and representatives are not liable), and that poor countries do not have a just cause to redistributive wars, given the condition that the target country of the military force must be liable. Since it is likely that culpability is necessary for liability, it is also likely that redistributive wars would not meet the just cause principle.

Now, some authors think that “culpability is not necessary for liability” (McMahan, 2005b: 393). Jeff McMahan (2009: 157; 2005b: 394), for instance, argues that “mere moral responsibility for an unjust threat of wrongful harm to another may be sufficient for liability to attack”. Even if a person is not culpable, it does not mean “that the person is absolved of all responsibility” (McMahan, 2009: 162). When a person “knowingly” acts in a way that imposes on others a foreseeable risk – driving a car is an example (McMahan, 2005b: 393-394) – then one is morally responsible for the threat if that risk materializes, and hence also liable to counter-measures (cf. McMahan, 2009: 167-168).²⁵ As applied to issues of war, McMahan’s (2009: 34) claim implies that a country or its citizens can lack culpability but still have sufficient moral responsibility to be liable to be warred upon. In his view, it is “a mistake to suppose that noninnocence in the sense of moral guilt or culpability is necessary for liability to attack in war”. Although causal responsibility is not sufficient for liability, moral responsibility (for an unjust risk-imposing activity) is sufficient (cf. Ferzan, 2012: 676).

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that McMahan’s view that moral responsibility is sufficient for liability is acceptable (although it has been widely criticized) (see e.g. Kaufman, 2009: 400).²⁶ Would that mean that rich countries are liable to being attacked in the name of global justice? Granted that Pogge’s theory about the causes of global poverty is correct, we can safely assume that rich countries are at least causally responsible for the actions that have caused severe poverty. The critical

²⁴ For a discussion, see e.g. Frowe, 2010; Steinhoff, 2013.

²⁵ See also Ferzan’s (2012: 676) discussion in “Culpable Aggression: The Basis for Moral Liability to Defensive Killing”.

²⁶ See also the other comments in the same section of the book.

question, then, is whether rich countries (or their citizens or representatives) have knowingly taken *foreseeable* risks, however “tiny” they might have been,²⁷ when they have committed the actions that have caused extreme poverty in poor countries. Did the citizens or representatives of rich countries know or should they have known that by borrowing money to poor countries or by voting politicians that allow current business relations with poor countries or by buying cheap products from local shops, for instance, they impose a *risk* that about 18 million premature poverty-related deaths per year will occur?

Thomas Pogge (2005: 55-83, esp. 55) thinks that not only a risk but the actual materialization of “radical inequality” has been foreseeable, but we are not committed to accept his view on this issue. The assumption here is that Pogge’s theory of the causes of global poverty is correct, not that everything what he has said or written in his life is correct. However, Pogge may be on right track. Surely there are people, say international business leaders, bankers, or politicians, who have realized that their decisions impose a serious and unjust *risk* on people who live in poor countries. One need not accept Pogge’s theory in order to realize the risk. This said, however, it would be doubtful to claim that all rich countries or their citizens or representatives have *knowingly* imposed a foreseeable risk on others or that they should have realized it if they have done it. (Whether they should have realized it depends partly on whether they could have realized it, which is an empirical question.) Notice also that one of the conditions of liability on McMahan’s (2005b: 397) account is that the causal connections “are of the right sort for the transmission of moral responsibility”. It is unclear whether the causal connections from our daily behaviour to millions of deaths are of the “right sort” (cf. Steinhoff, 2012). (A killer’s mother could have foreseen that there is a small probability that her child will become a murderer, but there need not be the right sort of causal connection between her having a child and that child’s later crime.) (McMahan, 2005b: 397.) Arguably, rich countries are not liable to attack even on

²⁷ McMahan (2005b: 394) assumes that taking even “a tiny risk” may make a person liable to counter-measures.

McMahan's permissive account of liability.²⁸ Therefore, I conclude that it is not clear whether a global redistributive war would meet the just cause principle when it is understood in the way Lippert-Rasmussen does. To claim that it does is to assume that (1) culpability is not necessary for liability, *and* (2) that the moral responsibility of some individual persons can be attributed to all rich countries.²⁹ Both assumptions are questionable. One need not have a profound theory which tells exactly *whose* liability makes a group of *countries* liable in order to understand that few individual bankers' and politicians' liability is unlikely to make entire countries liable and consequently their military targets liable to armed attacks.³⁰

Lippert-Rasmussen's (2013: 79) conclusion that "the just cause requirement, plausibly construed, does not rule out the possibility of just redistributive wars" seems inaccurate. It is likely that redistributive wars would not be just, as they would not meet the just cause principle. Neither would such wars be morally permissible.³¹ A global redistributive war, in the world as we know it, would not satisfy the reasonable probability of success principle nor the proportionality principle. As Lippert-Rasmussen (2013: 81) makes clear, his rejection of those principles applies only to cases in which the justness of a war is evaluated, not to cases in which the moral permissibility of a war is evaluated. Both principles should be taken into account in considerations concerning the moral permissibility of a redistributive war.

²⁸ Of course, one could argue that since *some* persons *are* liable to attack, then there is a just cause to attack rich countries. Perhaps the liable persons (and their possible followers) can be killed by using military force, although it would mean "mass killings of innocent civilians as a side-effect". Cf. Lippert-Rasmussen, 2013: 82.

²⁹ Here I assume that one cannot be liable without being morally responsible.

³⁰ If the armed forces of a country commit an unjust aggression, this action is likely to make the "country" liable and thus its military targets liable to defensive attacks.

³¹ Of course, a person may have a right to self-defense even if the attacker is not "morally responsible". For a discussion, see e.g. Mapel, 2009: 19.

5. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen fails to show that, if Pogge's analysis of the causes of global poverty is correct, then global redistributive wars would be just. It is unclear whether such wars would satisfy the just cause principle. It seems that Thomas Pogge, who is not willing to accept that his analysis of the global poverty justifies military action, can relax (although not because of the reasons he presents in his reply to Lippert-Rasmussen).³²

At the end of his discussion, Pogge argues that it would be better if Lippert-Rasmussen had not presented his criticism at all. According to Pogge, Lippert-Rasmussen helps those who are eager to justify an unjust *status quo* by referring to "security reasons" or "security threats". Pogge (2013: 110) writes that, unfortunately,

tension, hostility and violence are much easier to create and to provoke than to stop, avert and avoid. Those with disproportionately superior military might are forever searching for opportunities through crises and emergencies to remind the world of the significance of their arsenals and forever trying to divert attention away from well-founded demands for justice by seeking to paint them as associated with "security threats" of one kind or another. Lippert-Rasmussen's macho talk of producing "a very large number of civilian casualties in rich countries" plays right into the hands of these people and marginalizes the one forum in which the world's poor have an unbeatable advantage: the forum of clear-headed moral debate and justification.

This is an argument against using certain kinds of arguments in academic debates, namely arguments whose messages conflict with the theses of Pogge's overtly political project and may help those with "superior military might". Although Pogge's project may be appealing, the way in which he pro-

³² I am not saying that my reply to Lippert-Rasmussen would be the one that Pogge is willing to accept. After all, he thinks that global redistributive wars would meet the just cause principle (Pogge, 2013: 106).

motes it is not. Personal assaults aside, surely we should allow all kinds of arguments in this context as we do in all other academic contexts. While a moral criticism against the content of one's opponent's argument is always morally acceptable, the moral criticism against presenting it seldom is.³³

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³³ There are few academic debates that become so well-known that they influence daily political argumentation directly. Of course, in the long run, the arguments used in academic debates may become very famous. Rawls' notion of the "veil of ignorance" can be found in comics nowadays.

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